

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Monthly Commander's Column



Don't press your luck this St. Pats Day Designate a sober driver

In anticipation of St. Patrick's Day, the Ohio State Highway Patrol is urging motorists to not press their luck and get behind the wheel impaired. Instead, Ohio motorists are strongly encouraged to plan ahead, designate a sober driver or find other transportation, and to not drive impaired.

For many Americans, St. Patrick's Day has become a popular night out to celebrate with friends and family. Unfortunately, due to the large number of drunk drivers, the night out has also become very dangerous.

During last year's St. Patrick's Day weekend, the Patrol made 159 OVI-related arrests during the 24-hour reporting period of 6 a.m. on March 17 through 6 a.m. on March 18, 2009. Four motorists also lost their lives that night – of which all four were OVI-related. That is four people who died and four families whose lives will never be the same - because someone decided to get behind the wheel impaired. These deaths all could have been avoided.

The Patrol recommends the following easy steps, for a safe St. Patrick's Day.

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin;
- Before drinking, please designate a sober driver and leave your car keys at home;
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation so you are sure to get home safely;
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, please call 1-877-7-PATROL or 1-877-772-8765

Driving impaired is simply not worth the risk. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant. Don't depend on dumb luck this St. Patrick's Day. Designate your sober driver before the party begins.

In addition to aggressively searching for impaired drivers, the Patrol is continuing its strict enforcement of seat belt violations with the What's Holding You Back?/Click It or Ticket campaign. Seat belts are a motorist's first line of defense against an impaired driver.